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TAGS: PREL PGOV KPKO UN AU SU

SUBJECT: MINAWI TO S/E NATSIOS: IDP CAMPS POLITICIZED FROM
KHARTOUM

Classified By: CDA A. Fernandez, Reason: Sections 1.4 (b) and (d)

Summary

¶11. (C) During a meeting with Senior Assistant to the President and Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) leader Minni Minawi, Special Envoy Natsios solicited insights on the UN/AU political process, rival SLM leader Abdulwahid al-Nur, and widespread reports of the resettlement of Chadian Arab groups in Darfur. Minawi provided his analysis of the political situation in the internally displaced persons (IDP) camps in Darfur, noting that both armed groups and the civilian population were "scattered" among political forces directed from Khartoum. He asserted that the political process must first focus on bridging the gaps between the political and military leaders of the rebel movements, who often sought different goals. Minawi also underscored the ethnic complexity in Darfur, positing that reconciliation should precede any determination of Chadian versus Sudanese nationality. End summary.

Demands of Rebels, IDPs Differ

¶12. (C) Meeting with Senior Assistant to the President and SLM leader Minni Minawi on July 12, S/E Natsios said that the President and the Secretary believed that a near-term political solution to the Darfur conflict was imperative and had asked him to concentrate on energizing the political process. In a trip to Darfur earlier that week, S/E Natsios had taken note of the demands of the IDPs--disarmament of armed groups, the return of seized land, and reconstruction and development--which differed from the demands articulated by the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) non-signatory leaders. Their demands instead focused on "political power," said Natsios, and included the reunification of the three Darfur states into a single region and a vice presidency position.

Minawi: IDP Camps Politicized from Khartoum

¶13. (C) Minawi explained that the IDP camps were becoming increasingly politicized and "scattered" between the major Northern political parties--the National Congress Party (NCP), Popular Congress Party (PCP), Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), and Umma Party. Each of these parties had "armed groups" operating in the camps under the guise of the "non-signatory label," according to Minawi. "Politically,

they're scattered," he said. Though the rank and file of the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), led by Khalil Ibrahim, were supposedly under the control of PCP leader Hassan Al Turabi, Minawi inferred that Ibrahim was moving to distance himself from Al Turabi's leadership. Minawi alleged that rival SLM leader Abdulwahid al-Nur paid IDPs for their support.

¶4. (C) The priority of the UN/AU political process should be to address the disconnect between the rebels' political leaders and the military commanders in the field, according to Minawi. Twenty-three armed groups now existed in Darfur and effort should be made to "accommodate them." "We should focus on the general stabilization of security," said Minawi.

He said that the initiative proposed by the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (CHD) could accomplish this goal but explained that Abdulwahid was reluctant to work with CHD Deputy Director Andrew Marshall because of his relationship with Sharif Harir. (Note: Minawi met recently with Marshall in Khartoum, who he has known since the negotiations for the 2004 N'djamena Ceasefire. CHD maintains that Abdulwahid's field commanders and potentially Abdulwahid himself remain willing to attend a CHD-organized meeting in the future. End note.)

¶5. (C) Minawi agreed with S/E Natsios that the demands of the Darfur rebels differed from those of the IDPs. The IDPs views had changed in the last three years. They were no longer willing to return to their previous homes until basic services such as those available in the IDP camps were in place. These services included clean water, electricity, and medical care.

The Inconsistent Abdulwahid

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¶6. (C) S/E Natsios solicited Minawi's views on Abdulwahid. Minawi characterized the rival SLM leader as "inconsistent" and without a "strategy." He recalled that when Abdulwahid had been held a virtual prisoner in Asmara in the fall of 2006 he had appealed to Minawi for U.S. intervention. After A/S Frazer interceded with Eritrea to secure his departure, Abdulwahid then fled to Europe and has since refused to participate in a constructive political process. According to Minawi, Abdulwahid survives on donations from "NGOs and the public," who believe they are giving the money to ease the suffering of the people of Darfur. "His mind is different than what he says," explained Minawi.

Arab Resettlement in Darfur

¶7. (C) S/E Natsios described widespread reports that the Sudanese Government was facilitating the resettlement of Chadian and Nigerian Arab tribes near Wadi Salih, West Darfur and highlighted U.S. concern on the issue. Minawi said that he had begun visiting Wadi Salih long before the outbreak of the Darfur rebellion in 2003. Even then, Chadian nomads would "come and go" and many became part of the local Arab tribes. "No one can recognize whether they are from Chad or Sudan," said Minawi. He asserted that inter and intra-tribal reconciliation at the local level should precede any determination of nationality. Recalling the long-standing ethnic complexity of Darfur, Minawi noted that some "African" tribes had become "Arab" over the last century, such as the Turjum. This is also happening with African tribes, such as the Gimr of West Darfur, who are armed by the Sudanese Government against their traditional enemies, the Zaghawa.

¶8. (U) SE Natsios did not have the opportunity to clear this message before his departure from Sudan.

FERNANDEZ